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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAKU 000240

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SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: FM MAMMADYAROV ON TURKMENISTAN, IRAN

REF: STATE 19372

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) This is an action request- please see paragraph 14.

2 (C) SUMMARY. In a February 19 meeting with the Ambassador, FM Mammadyarov said that the recently concluded visit of DoD A/S Rodman had clarified the USG position on Iran, and he approved of the USG focus on a diplomatic solution. Concerning the possibility of tabling at the UN the GUAM initiative on conflicts in the GUAM areas, Mammadyarov said he would "coordinate tactics" with DAS Bryza. Mammadyarov said that after returning from the Turkmenistan President's inauguration, PM Rasolzade was cautiously optimistic concerning an improvement in bilateral relations, and that the GOAJ would send a signal that Mammadyarov would visit Ashgabat if invited. END SUMMARY

13. (C) On February 19 the Ambassador met with FM Elmar Mammadyarov. Also present were Foreign Ministry America's Desk Office Elchin Bashirov and Emboff.

IRAN

14. (C) FM Mammadyarov said that he had met the previous day with the visiting German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who would be meeting with Secretary Rice and the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Berlin on February 121. He said that the Germans had an "interesting proposal" concerning Iran that they will discuss with Secretary Rice and the Russian Foreign Minister. Mammadyarov said that if the 'reformists' in the Iranian government hierarchy were flexible the proposal might be worthwhile.

15. (C) The Ambassador, drawing on reftel points, said that Iran's differences lie with its neighbors and the international community, that the US did not seek conflict with Iran and was seeking to use all diplomatic means to solve the extant problems. The USG would defend our national interests in the region and protect the sovereignty of friends, particularly from Iran's attempts to threaten our allies and to destabilize the region. She enumerated on how the USG was working to change Iran's behavior on several major issues. She asked if asked if DoD A/S Rodman's visit helped clarify the USG Iran position to the GOAJ. Mammadyarov said it did, and he was encouraged by the USG focus on solving the problem through diplomatic means and increased pressure on Iran. UNSC Resolution 1737 was a strong move by the international community, and helped focus the Iranian leadership on the relative pros and cons of Iran's nuclear program. In response to the Ambassador's

question, Mammadyarov asserted that the GOAJ would be fully complaint with UNSC 1737. Mammadyarov added that Iran must be given a 'face-saving option' that will allow it to forego continuing its nuclear efforts, a point with which the German FM had agreed. The Ambassador said that the US and international community had already given Iran such as face-saving option, which was still on the table.

¶16. (C) Mammadyarov said he had told the German FM that the Iranian nuclear program beyond being important in itself could have a domino effect for other countries, and that the international community needed to "rethink the NPT." He said the NPT in its current form was "ded," and that he told the German FM that it should spearhead efforts to revitalize the NPT in the UN, and that this could also be a theme of its EU leadership. Disagreeing that the NPT was dead, the Ambassador cautioned that raising the issue of the NPT. Mammadyarov said that Iran looked very closely at how the international community dealt with the North Korean nuclear issue.

¶17. (C) In response to Mammadyarov's question, the Ambassador said that the USG does not deny Iran's right to have a peaceful nuclear program, adding that it was its insistence on domestic uranium enrichment, reprocessing and related activities with the apparent aim of acquiring weapons capability that was problematic. Mammadyarov said that any Iranian enrichment should be done under the auspices of the IAEA, even if it was a joint venture with another country. He asked if the USG supported Russian off-shore enrichment of Iranian uranium. The Ambassador, saying that she wanted to ensure she was correctly reflecting the latest USG policy, said she would check with Washington. On another note,

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Mammadyarov said that his Embassy in Tehran was reporting significant price increases in basic staples in Tehran, such as bread. He also said that Deputy Foreign Minister Khalafov would be traveling to Tehran on February 26-27, as a reciprocal visit to the recent Baku visit of Iranian DFM Mehdi Safari.

¶18. (C) Ambassador noted that all Ambassadors were speaking with their Foreign Ministry counterparts about the Iranian threat and concomitant USG policy, stressing that the USG is committed to finding a diplomatic solution. The USG, working with its allies, is increasing economic pressure on Iran, and has sent a second carrier group to the Persian Gulf. The USG has also begun to react to Iranian efforts to attack Coalition forces in Iraq. Outside of UNSC 1737, the USG is also blacklisting those persons and companies involved in Iranian WMD and nuclear efforts. On a positive side, the USG is increasing exchange programs, grants and sports exchanges, to include the recent visit of a US wrestling team to Iran.

¶19. (C) The FM asked if the USG was allowing any investment in Iran's energy sector, adding that the French company Total has been quick to profit from the absence of US energy companies in Iran. The Ambassador reiterated USG policy of on investment in Iran's energy sector and th importance of support from the international community.'

GENOCIDE RESOLUTION

¶10. (C) Mammadyarov asked about the status of the Armenian Genocide resolution in Congress (HR 106), adding that this issue was very important. The Ambassador said that she did not know the latest status, but would check and get back to him.

TURKMENISTAN

¶11. (C) Mammadyarov said that the Prime Minister Rasizade, traveled to Turkmenistan for the inauguration of Kurbanguly

Berdymukhamedov. Rasizadeh told Mammadyarov that he had had a good meeting with the new Turkman President. According to Rasizade, Berdymukhamedov was cautiously sending a message to the GOAJ, and at one point told Rasizade that "let us keep the bad in the past and turn to a new page; let us see what we can do in the Caspian." Mammadyarov said that if Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan could come to an agreement re Caspian delimitation, "the Iran Caspian problem would be solved." He pointed out that the network of gas pipelines already exists in the Caspian to accommodate the Turkmen offshore gas that is near the Azerbaijan Caspian Sea border. A good sign of a new Turkmen attitude would be if the new Turkmen government posts an Ambassador to Baku, to fill the position that has been vacant for the last five years. Mammadyarov said that he himself would seek to travel to Turkmenistan after the new government is formalized, and that the GOAJ Ambassador in Turkmenistan has communicated Mammadyarov's willingness to do so. (Septel reports DFM Khalafov's follow-up request to the Ambassador that the USG and GOAJ intensify dialogue and cooperate vis a vis Turkmenistan).

¶12. (C) Mammadyarov said that he was scheduled to attend an OIC meeting in Jeddah on February 21 that will discuss energy issues at the Foreign Minister level.

GUAM RESOLUTION

¶13. (C) The Ambassador cautioned Mammadyarov about the risks of tabling at the UN the GUAM initiative on conflicts in the GUAM area, pointing out that once GUAM tables the text, it is out of its control, with the possibility of the text being turned into something antithetical to GUAM interests. Mammadyarov said he had wanted to table the resolution now as a "first step" that would enable him to work the issue at the UN. In response to the Ambassador's warnings about this move possibly backfiring, Mammadyarov said he had been expecting a call from PDAS Bryza after the latest Minsk Group meetings in Paris, but had not heard from him on this subject. He would "coordinate tactics" with Bryza on next steps.

¶14. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Per FM Mammadyarov's request for more information, Embassy requests the official USG position on Russian offshore enrichment of uranium for Iran, and the

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current status of the Armenian Genocide Resolution (House Resolution 106).
DERSE